



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

AUG 09 2019

F-2019-06626

MuckRock News
DEPT MR 73595
411A Highland Ave.
Somerville, MA 02144

Dear Ms. Best:

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of your request dated May 23, 2019, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, to the Department of State, in which you requested “Documents generated as part of the creation of the FOIA office (defined as whatever department, office, or coordinator is responsible for overseeing and/or processing FOIA requests).”

The Office of Information Programs and Services (IPS) received your FOIA request on May 31, 2019. Your FOIA request was assigned the tracking number at the top of this letter. Please include the tracking number in all future communications concerning this FOIA request. We have classified you as a representative of the news media.

The records you seek require the need to search in offices that are separate from the office processing your request. Accordingly, your request falls within “unusual circumstances” as defined in the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(B)(i)-(iii). Because of these unusual circumstances, we need to extend the time limit to respond to your request beyond the ten additional days provided by the statute.

The time needed to complete our work on your request will necessarily depend on a variety of factors including the number of locations that must be searched, the complexity of the search, the volume and complexity of any material located, and consultations with other U.S. Government agencies whose information is included in the material located. The time needed will also depend on the number of other requests ahead of it in the relevant processing track.

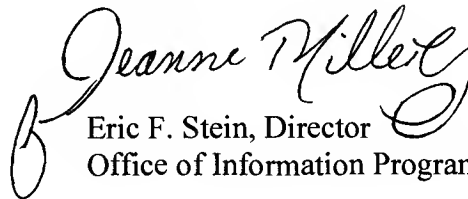
This Office assigns incoming requests to one of three tracks: simple, complex, or expedited. Each request is then handled on a first-in, first-out basis in relation to other requests in the same track. Your request has been assigned to the complex track and will be handled as quickly as possible.

In an effort to speed the processing of your request, you may wish to narrow the scope of your request. Among the ways you can do so is by narrowing the date range of requested records, reducing the number of topics requested, excluding certain types of records (such as e-mails and/or paper records) from the request, identifying the particular office/bureau from which you are seeking records, and limiting the number of potentially responsive records you seek. You can also agree to an alternative time frame for processing, should records be located, or you may wish to await the completion of our records search to discuss either of these options.

I regret the necessity of this delay, but I assure you that your request will be processed as soon as possible. If you wish to discuss narrowing of your request or an alternative time frame for the processing of your request, or if you have any questions regarding the status of your request, you may contact our FOIA Requester Service Center or our FOIA Public Liaison via email at FOIAstatus@state.gov or telephone at (202) 261-8484.

Lastly, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, email address: ogis@nara.gov; telephone: (202) 741-5770; toll free number: 1-877-684-6448; facsimile: (202) 741-5769.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric F. Stein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Eric F. Stein, Director
Office of Information Programs and Services